MODEL RULES FOR BAPTIST CHURCHES

and

A MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR BAPTIST CHURCHES

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MODEL RULES FOR BAPTIST CHURCHES.

Framed by a Sub-Committee appointed by the Baptist Council, June, 1911.

ADOPTED BY THE

.....BAPTIST CHURCH

Date.....

Hunkin, Ellis, & King, 111-113 Pirie-st.

An Order of Business for Church Meetings.

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1. Read and confirm Minutes of previous meeting.
2. Admission of Candidates.
3. Proposition of New Members.
4. Removals and Transfers.
   Report of Deaths of Church Members.
5. Report of Baptisms and Receptions at Communion.
6. Financial Statement.
7. Business from last meeting.
8. New Business introduced by Officers.
9. Cases of Discipline.
10. Notices of Motion; Questions and Suggestions.

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RULES.

I.

This Church shall be called the Baptist Church.

II.

Whilst this Church holds and teaches that New Testament Baptism means the immersion of believers, and regards this ordinance as binding on Christ's disciples, yet its membership shall not be limited to such immersed believers, but all who profess saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and give credible evidence of such faith in daily life, shall be eligible for membership.

III.

Candidates for membership shall be admitted by vote of the members of the Church present at a Church meeting. Such persons shall be proposed at a Church meeting, the next prior to the meeting at which such vote shall be taken, and shall be recommended by the Pastor, or, in his absence, by the elders (if any) and Deacons. Testimony as to their spiritual experience shall be borne by the Pastor, or by the other officers. Evidence shall be given by those qualified to supply it of the Candidate's consistent Christian walk.

Candidates by transfer from other churches may be voted upon at the time of proposal.

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IV.

Any member absent from the Lord's Table for three consecutive months, without just cause known to the Church, may be erased from the roll on the vote of the Church.

V.

In all cases where members, by any practices inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament, cause dissatisfaction in the minds of their fellow-members, and reproach to the world, messengers appointed by the Church or Elders and Deacons, shall investigate and report upon the circumstances of such cases, and the Church, or these officers, shall take such action as may be deemed advisable.

VI.

The Pastor shall be of the Baptist denomination, and shall practice the immersion in water into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of Christians on the profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. He shall have been chosen by the vote of at least two-thirds part of the members for the time being as shall be personally present at a Special Church Meeting, duly convened in harmony with the provisions of the Trust Deed, for that purpose. Only members qualified by age to be allowed to vote See Rule XII.

VII.

The Church shall elect annually such Officers as may be required for the proper

management of its work—Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditors, Home and Foreign Mission Agents, &c.—as may be deemed necessary. All elections to be by ballot, unless otherwise decided. The Annual Church Meeting to be held in the month of.....

Should any offices become vacant at any other time, the vacancies may be filled by the Church at its discretion.

VIII.

The Officers shall make a yearly revision of the Church Members' Roll, and submit their recommendations concerning the same to the Annual Church Meeting.

IX.

All who conduct any religious service in connection with the Church or occupy posts of service in any of its institutions, shall either be members of the Church or such as have the full sanction of the Pastor and Officers.

X.

Church Meetings shall be held Monthly or Quarterly, and at such other times as the Pastor and Officers deem advisable.

XI.

No business shall be submitted to the Church without the consent of the Pastor and Officers. Should such consent not be obtained, any member may introduce business at any meeting, after having given notice of motion thereof in writing at the Church Meeting immediately preceding.

XII.

Members under the age of eighteen years shall not vote in matters of Church business.

XIII.

An account of the income and expenditure of the Church shall be read and entered upon the minutes at least quarterly, and a balance-sheet for the year, duly audited, shall be laid before the Church at the Annual Meeting.

XIV.

Every member of the Church shall be expected to contribute weekly, according to ability, to the support of the Church, and to take a practical interest in all its Mission work, both at home and abroad.

XV.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a month. Recognised members of other Evangelical Churches, and all who love the Lord Jesus Christ shall be welcomed to the Communion.

XVI.

All who become members are understood to be in sympathy with the Church, to be willing to work harmoniously with their fellow members, and to be subject to the Church rules, a copy of which shall be given to each member on joining

XVII.

No alteration in, or addition to, these Rules shall be made, except by the votes of at least two-thirds of the members present at a Church Meeting, of which one month's notice has been given.

XVIII.

The Church may from time to time, by resolution, provide for the number of officers to be elected, the appointment of Agents, the times for observing the Lord's Supper, the methods of finance, and other matters not inconsistent with the Rules or the Trust Deed.

NEW RESOLUTIONS.

Questions Suggested as Appropriate for New Members.

1. It is fitting you should consider that our Lord's commission that His Disciples should be baptized, still remains. Will you please signify your willingness to obey His Divine Will? Do not decline it without satisfying yourself that you have His authority for so doing.

2. In what Christian work are you prepared to share?

3. Will you agree to contribute to the funds of the Church regularly each week through the envelopes?

4. Will you manifest an active interest in the affairs of the Church by attending its business meetings as often as you can?

5. Will you endeavour to strengthen the Church by maintaining your own spiritual life in close touch with Jesus Christ, and by constant prayer for the Church, its Officers and institutions?

6. Will you always regard the interests of the Church as your own, and do all you can to promote harmony and goodwill among your fellow members?

7. Will you assist the Pastor in every possible way—by regular attendance at the services, by acquainting him of any cases of sickness or trouble that may be known to you, by personally seeking out new converts and new adherents as you have opportunity?

Seven Reasons

. . FOR . .

Believers' Baptism

(By Rev. F.B. Meyer, B.A.,D.D.)

Believers should be Baptised because

1. **The Lord Jesus was Baptised.**—Matt. 3, 13

2 **Christ commanded it.**—Matt. 28, 19.

3. **The Apostles practised it.**—Acts 2, 41; 8, 8, 36; 10, 47-48; 16, 33.

4. **It is a beautiful Symbol of the Forgiveness Sin.**—Matt. 3, 6.

5. **It is a Badge of Discipleship.**—Matt. 28, 19; "Make disciples . . baptising them

6. **It marks a Breach with the Old, and a for a New and Better Life.**—Rom. 6. 4.

7. **It is the Profession of Belief in the fact Christ's Life, Death and Resurrection.**—Colossians 2, 12; 3, 1.

A Model Constitution

...for...

Baptist Churches

By Rev. H. B. Foskett

Third Revised Edition

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FOREWORD

These Articles aim to meet the need of a more exact method of procedure in the business life of some of our churches and for a better system of service. They are in use in quite a large number of churches and have been reviewed and revised by many different committees at various times to secure brevity of statement, clearness and adaptability.

They have been found especially helpful in reorganization where difficulties have arisen from unsatisfactory methods, having been thoroughly tested at the points where such difficulties are liable to occur.

This edition contains a few changes made necessary by our improved program and methods in the denominational task, especially regarding missionary and religious education. Its provisions seek to meet the needs of the average church; but they may be easily adjusted to the requirements of large organizations.

Statements of policy, restrictions, etc., may be incorporated in standing resolutions, if deemed necessary; but the Constitution should not be burdened with them.

H. B. FOSKETT.

Los Angeles,
September, 1927.

Historic Baptist Principles

1. The preëminence of Christ as our divine Lord and Master.
2. The supreme authority of the Bible and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice.
3. The right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.
4. The absolute separation of church and state.
5. A regenerate church membership.
6. The beautiful, symbolic ordinance of believer's baptism in obedience to the command of Christ.
7. The complete independence of the local church and its inter-dependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist churches.
8. The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and affording special privileges to none.
9. The spiritual unity of all believers for which the Master so earnestly prayed.
10. A world-wide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Jesus.

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of the Baptists and in those great, distinctive principles for which they have ever stood, and accepting as a general summary of doctrines and duties the Covenant and Articles of Faith contained in the New Manual issued by the American Baptist Publication Society:

We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government and plan of worship and service the following articles; and we hereby rescind all previous action contrary thereto.

ARTICLE I.

NAME.

This organization shall be known as.....

.....

in affiliation with.....

.....

.....

ARTICLE II.

MEMBERSHIP.

SECTION 1. This church shall consist of baptized believers in Christ who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.

SEC. 2. Persons may be received into membership by letter from other Baptist churches; by relation of Christian experience having been previously baptized; by relation of Christian experience and baptism: in each case the candidate giving evidence of a change of heart and the testimony of

a Christian life and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church. All candidtes for membership should appear first before the pastor and deacons, or be personally known to them and by them be recommended to membership.

SEC. 3. A member may be dismissed to the fellowship of another Baptist church by a letter of recommendation. A member wishing to withdraw from this church to enter some other denomination, may be granted a certificate of Christian character and his name shall be erased from the roll.

SEC. 4. A member under discipline is prohibited from all the rights of membership. If found guilty of the charges made, he may, by a two-thirds vote of all adult members present and voting, be excluded. Provided, however, that due notice of the meeting be given to all the church in advance, and the accused member afforded an opportunity to appear in his own behalf, (except in the case of notorious sin); and provided also, that the steps pointed out by the Master in the 5th and 18th chapters of Matthew be strictly followed, to secure reconciliation and forgiveness, if possible, before the church takes action.

ARTICLE III.

OFFICERS.

SECTION 1. The officers of this church shall consist of a pastor, clerk, financial secretary, treasurer of finance, treasurer of beneficence, superintendent of the Bible school, ... deacons, ... deaconesses, and ..... trustees.

SEC. 2. The pastor shall be elected for an indefinite term, the relation to be dissolved by mutual agreement after ..... months' notice.

The call or dismissal of a pastor shall come before the church at a regularly called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two successive Sabbaths previous.

A .. .. vote of all adult members present and voting shall be necessary to make such action valid.

SEC. 3. The boards of deacons, deaconesses and trustees shall serve for a term of years corresponding to the number on each board, one on each board to be elected annually after the first election. At the first election one member on each board shall be chosen for the full term, the next to serve a year less, and so on,—the last one chosen to serve a single year.

All other officers shall be elected for one year each.

SEC. 4. Whenever, by reason of age or faithful service, any member of the board of deacons or deaconesses shall be deemed worthy of promotion for life, the church by a three-fourths majority vote may so elect. Ordination may follow if the church and candidate shall so decide.

SEC. 5. All officers shall be elected by ballot and hold over till their successors are chosen. Where more than two candidates are presented on the first ballot, and no one receives a majority of all votes cast, the two receiving the highest number shall become candidates for the next and final vote. Vacancies in office may be filled at any regular Quarterly Business Meeting.

ARTICLE IV.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

SECTION 1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly, administer the ordinances, act as moderator of all meetings for the transaction of business, supervise the teaching ministry of the church, tenderly watch over its membership and spiritual interests, and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.

SEC. 2. The deacons shall prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, attend to the necessities of the poor, help the pastor in his visita-

tions, superintend all affairs of the church not in charge of other officers and aid the pastor in jealously guarding and fostering the spiritual life of the church.

SEC. 3. The deaconesses shall perform similar services, except the distribution of the elements of the Lord's Supper. They shall give special attention to the visitation of the sick and poor of the community. The relief fund of the church shall be committed to their trust for such kindly ministry as they shall find opportunity to bestow.

SEC. 4. The trustees shall hold in trust all the property of the church. They shall have supervision of such property, make all necessary repairs, provide the funds to maintain the work and property of the church whenever authorized so to do, disbursing the same as the church shall direct. They shall employ a sexton for the care of the church building and direct his labors.

SEC. 5. The clerk shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the church at all meetings, keep a complete registry of membership, issue letters of dismission and certificates of Christian character as directed by the church, conduct all its official correspondence, and preserve all documents, papers and letters coming into his hands during his term of office, delivering the same and all records kept by him to his successor.

SEC. 6. The financial secretary shall act as the bookkeeper of the church, receiving all moneys from all sources, recording the same and then turning them over promptly to the church treasurers. He shall keep a separate account with each contributor, and furnish statements to each one at the regular quarterly business meetings.

SEC. 7. The treasurer of finance shall receive from the financial secretary all funds contributed for pastoral support and current expense and disburse the same as ordered by the church or finance committee. At each quarterly and annual meeting he shall present a detailed report of receipts and disbursements, showing the actual financial condition of the church.

SEC. 8. The treasurer of beneficence shall receive and disburse all moneys paid into the church treasury for the great missionary, educational and beneficent work of the denomination. He shall do all in his power to enlist every member in support of the great forward movement of the denomination.

SEC. 9. The superintendent shall conduct the sessions of the Bible school, endeavoring to enlist the hearty coöperation of the whole church in Bible study and instruction. He shall assist the pastor in looking after the spiritual interests of the school, seeking the early conversion of all who are under his care. He shall select as an assistant superintendent a member of the church in good standing, who shall aid him in the management of the school and superintend it in his absence.

ARTICLE V.

COMMITTEES.

The following committees and boards shall be selected at each annual meeting as the church shall direct, to serve for one year.

1. An Advisory Board consisting of all the officers of the church and the president of each society or organization connected with it, the pastor to be chairman.

2. A Board of Finance and Beneficence consisting of the two Treasurers, the Financial Secretary and ..... other members.

3. A Board of Missionary and Religious Education consisting of the pastor and superintendent of the Bible school and ..... additional members.

4. A Baptismal Committee.

5. A Music Committee of ..... members.

6. A Board of Ushers, to consist of ..... persons, the first one named to be head usher.

7. Other committees.

.....

.....

.....

ARTICLE VI.

DUTIES OF COMMITTEES.

SECTION 1. The Advisory Board shall act as the working cabinet of the pastor, advising with him upon all matters pertaining to the general policy of the church and the work of its various societies and organizations.

This Board shall meet regularly every three months just previous to the quarterly business meeting of the church. Special meetings may be called at any time at the request of three members of the Board, or by the Pastor.

SEC. 2. The Board of Finance and Beneficence shall supervise all matters pertaining to the budgets for current expense and beneficence. At each annual meeting it shall present to the church for adoption a detailed statement of the budgets of expense and beneficence for the ensuing year, and conduct an every member canvass to meet them.

The Board shall use all reasonable efforts throughout the year to provide necessary funds for meeting promptly and faithfully each month all the obligations of the church.

SEC. 3. The Board of Missionary and Religious Education shall supervise and develop the educational task of the church as carried on by its Bible School, School of Missions, and Church Vacation School, its missionary societies and young people's organizations. This board shall be responsible for the dissemination of information and the cultivation of a strong abiding interest in the missionary task. It shall endeavor to secure an every member enlistment for coöperation in some definite way in efficient service for world evangelism.

SEC. 4. The Music Committee shall have charge of the musical part of the worship, providing books, organist and chorister. It shall incur expense only as authorized by the church or the Finance Committee.

SEC. 5. The Board of Ushers shall look after the seating and general comfort of the congregation, endeavoring to extend such courtesies as shall make all who come to the services feel at home in our Father's House.

ARTICLE VII.

MEETINGS.

SEC. 1. The Annual Meeting shall be held each year on..... ..... At this meeting shall occur the election of officers, selection of committees, reports of officers and committees for the past year, and from all societies and organizations connected with the church, and a roll-call of the membership. Other business may be transacted as shall be found necessary.

SEC. 2. Quarterly business meetings shall be held on the.....evening in the months of ....., ..., ..., and .....

SEC. 3. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or by .... adult members of the church.

ARTICLE VIII.

VOTING.

SECTION 1. All elections shall be by ballot; other voting at the will of the church. While no one can be refused the privilege of presenting candidates

publicly by name; yet the plan presented in Art. III, Sec. 5, does not contemplate public nomination to any official position in the gift of the church, except that of Pastor, and distinctly discourages such nominations either by committees or individuals, leaving the church free to nominate by ballot.

..... adult members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 2. In the reception and dismissal of members, and in all ordinary matters each member shall be entitled to a vote. But in the call or the dismissal of a pastor; in the purchase or sale of property; in all cases of discipline; in all matters involving the expenditure of large sums of money and in amending these Articles, adult members only shall be eligible to vote. This provision may be interpreted liberally, however, so as to include the young people of the church over 16 years of age who are actively engaged in its work.

SEC. 3. A three-fourths affirmative vote of all members present and voting shall be required for the purchase or the sale of property. Public notice of such proposed action shall be read by the clerk at the previous quarterly business meeting, or from the pulpit on two preceding Sundays.

ARTICLE IX.

AMENDMENTS.

These Articles may be changed or amended at any regular business meeting by a three-fourths affirmative vote of all members present and voting; provided, however, that a written notice of such change shall have been proposed and read at a regular business meeting of the church at least three months previous; and provided, also, that such alteration shall not conflict with the Articles of Incorporation of this church.

BY-LAWS

1. All business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

2. The Pastor shall be a member *ex-officio* of all committees.

3. All motions when requested shall be presented in writing.

4. All questions of order shall be settled by the customary rules governing deliberative bodies, as given in "Robert's Rules of Order."

5. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements therefor, including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than its stated appointments shall be under the control of the Advisory Board as ordered by the church.

6. The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly on the ..... Sunday of each ..... month.

7. A monthly Covenant meeting shall be held during the week preceding the Communion service.

8. The following order of business shall be observed at all regular business meetings of the church.

Order of Business.

1. Devotional.
3. Reading of Minutes.
3. Reception of Members.
4. Dismission of Members.
5. Reports of Officers.
6. Reports of Standing Committees.
7. Reports of Special Committees.
8. Unfinished Business.
9. Election of Officers.
10. New Business.
11. Adjournment.

9. These by-laws may be altered, suspended or amended at any meeting of the church, by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting.

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